1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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passed, and so drove them forward over the bank into the enclosure. After horses were secured, the buffalo were generally run down. It is said that a buffalo shot with an arrow fell to the other side, never breaking the arrow by falling upon it. 224

The meat of an entire buffalo would be carried on a horse. It was cut in small pieces, which were tied to the ends of strips of the skin and then slung over the horse's back so as to balance. If necessary, the hunter would mount above. It is said that sometimes as many as four deer were carried on one horse. 492

When a buffalo was killed, half the skin was sometimes stitched or tied into a sack, the meat put into it, and the bundle dragged home by a rope around the shoulders of a person. In other cases the meat would be tied into bundles and carried home on the shoulders. The buffalo were usually cut up by men. Women were said to have taken part in this work when luck was unusually good and many buffalo had been killed. After a man had brought home meat, the women cut it into thin slices, which were hung on racks to dry. The dried meat was either packed in parfleches, or pounded fine and made into pemmican by mixture with berries. Meat, whether fresh or dried, was usually eaten after having been boiled in water; but when one was hungry or in haste a piece would be put on a stick and turned over the fire. 480 251 252

Traps for foxes and other animals, even bears, were constructed by making an enclosure, over the opening of which a heavy log, sliding between four sticks to keep it in place, was supported on a single slender upright stick resting on another stick attached to the bait. Other logs might be leaned against the first one to give it additional weight.

Birds such as sage-hens, ducks, and geese, were formerly not hunted extensively. The eggs, however, formed favorite food. When a camp was pitched near a lake, the young men would strip and go out into the water looking for duck-eggs. Fish were not caught except by children, for amusement. 223 226

When a camp was broken, small brush tents with windows of grass were built. Fat and meat were strewed about the place and a man entered the ambush before daylight. He could look and shoot through the grass, but he could not be seen inside. Birds as large as eagles were secured in this way.

Crows and magpies were caught with sinew snares attached to a willow hoop. Meat was laid in the middle of the hoop. Walking about inside of this, the birds caught their feet in the snares and were unable to fly away.

Gophers were caught by means of a horsehair loop fastened to the end of a rope and laid around a gopher-hole. A person lay down, and when the gopher raised its head he jerked the rope. 224

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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INDUSTRIES AND IMPLEMENTS.

281 When a skin was brought in, it was hung on a sort of tripod, and with a chisel-like flesher of buffalo-leg bone the meat was removed. Then the hide was stretched on the ground to dry. When dried, the hair and thin coat of skin on the same side were cut off with the familiar implement of bent elk-horn, always provided, in recent times, with a metal blade. To make rawhide, nothing more was done. To make dressed skin, liver, grease, and brains, boiled and mixed in the proper proportion, were rubbed [177] or soaked into the skin and then removed with an ordinary scraper, now usually of sheet-iron or tin. Finally the skin was worked over with a rough stone or a bone. In preparing buffalo-skins for a tent, four steps were recognized: first, drying the skins; next, removing the hair; third, soaking them; and, last, scraping and working them over. Skins were softened by being drawn over a rope of buffalo-sinew.

281 342 476 When a woman had prepared enough buffalo-skins for a tent, she made a feast and invited other women who were skilful at making tents. The most expert of these fitted and tacked the skins together loosely, and the others sewed them fast. When a robe was to be embroidered, the woman who wanted to make it prepared food and invited other women to help her in her work. When the robe was finished, the man who was to receive it was called in, and it was given to him.

281 Caps of buffalo-skin were worn in winter. They were provided with flaps that were pulled down over the ears and held by a string fastened under the chin. Mittens of buffalo-skin were also used, tied together by a string which passed behind the neck. When the hunter was ready to shoot, he slipped his hands out of the mittens.

282 Simple flat unbraided ropes of rawhide were cut out of the skin in a long spiral. After having been cut, they were stretched between two sticks. In order to soften them, they were covered with manure, or tied to a horse that dragged them over the ground until they became pliable.

323 252 Pottery is declared to have been made formerly of clay mixed with crushed rock. Rawhide bags, drawn together at the top with a string, were also used for cooking by means of hot rocks. The often described Plains method of cooking in holes in the ground lined with rawhide was also followed.

372 When fire was struck with flint and steel, dry mushrooms were sometimes used as tinder.

411 Bows were most frequently made of cherry-wood, but sometimes of ash. Ash was harder and more elastic, but more brittle. Sinew backing was

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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ends of the main portion of the sling, and then looped on themselves through a slit near one end.

The bull-roarer and buzzer were both well known to the Gros Ventre, but seem to be only children's toys. They were both called nakan"ta" ("making cold," a name given also to the thermometer), probably from the widespread Indian idea that the bull-roarer breeds wind. The buzzer was made of a foot-bone of a buffalo, with a sinew string on each side, by which it was twirled, and then drawn so as to hum. The Arapaho type of buzzer is the same. The Gros Ventre bull-roarer seems to differ from the Arapaho form. Fig. 20 shows one of two very similar models, both of wood. The small, well-marked head, the long taper and point, and the numerous small notches, mark a distinct form. The sinew string is of about the length of the stick handle.

WAR.

Men generally went to war on foot, carrying food and moccasins on their backs. While on the trip they did not boil meat, but roasted it. Scouts, called "wolves," were sent out ahead. When these returned, running in a zigzag course, and shouting, it was a sign that they had seen something. If they had seen lodges, they barked like wolves. While they came, the women in the party stood in a row and sang, having made a pile of buffalo-chips. The "wolves" stopped a short distance away, and the leader of the party went to them. They came with him back to the pile of buffalo-chips, where he stopped, and, facing the party, recounted coups. After this, one of the scouts came before them and reported what he had seen. Upon this, all rushed at the pile of buffalo-chips, and kicked them about. If the enemy were near, they would now take off their heavier clothing, such as their robes, and dress and paint for war.

On returning to their camp victorious, the party approached stealthily, and made a charge upon it, often shooting; and sometimes the people in the tents jumped up out of their sleep in the early morning, thinking they had been attacked. The man who had killed an enemy, the one who had struck him first (whether dead or alive), and the one who had taken his gun, were held in about the same esteem. After the return to camp, a dance was made. Drums were beaten; and the women, who were standing in a curved row, danced in a circle toward the men, who stood in a row, and back again. The women carried the new scalps on sticks. If an enemy were killed near the home camp, his feet and hands might be cut off and carried on sticks, like the scalps. During this dance the man who first

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

231
556 than in the actual production of raw materials. This was especially true of the young unmarried man who, though his ability to hunt was important, was even more anxious to establish his reputation for bravery.

Food

262 The Gros Ventres met their need for food very largely, but not exclusively, through a meat diet. Flesh of the buffalo was the meat par excellence and was considered by the Gros Ventres their "real food." To those who had been brought up on buffalo meat, beef was a poor substitute. It was said, by those who experienced the change of diet after the disappearance of the buffalo in 1884, that many of the older people "died of starvation" when deprived of buffalo meat. The Gros Ventres refused for a long time to accustom themselves to beef because "beef, even when fresh, smells so badly, and when we would see oxen slobber it turned our stomachs."

Buffalo meat, either fresh or dried, formed a major part of the dietary the year round. Each man had his own preference as to various parts of the buffalo. Charles Buckman, for instance, liked best the flanks, if fat, but some preferred the brisket. The tenderest part was the hump (withers) and the tenderloin was also a delicacy. Roast ribs, a whole rib for each person, were considered a most succulent feast and the embryo was highly appreciated. It was customary to eat raw the liver and manifolds dipped in blood and to drink some of the fresh blood. Nothing of the buffalo was wasted and every possible part was eaten even to the predigested vegetable food from the stomach and the soft inner part of the hoofs. The coagulated milk from a buffalo cow carrying young or nursing a calf was enjoyed by most, although it was [251] reported that some individuals did not care particularly for it. The guts were cleaned, dried, cooked and put away, and the lungs were sliced and dried. To be eaten with dried meat the back fat was cooked, and tallow was used in like manner. The bones were broken and boiled, and, after the grease was skimmed off and ● 252 stored, the bone broth was used plain or with either blood or 262 berries therein.

Pemmican was made from the base of the tenderloin, a long

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

strip on each side of the backbone. The meat was jerked, roasted a little and pounded. Then bone grease was kneaded into the pounded meat and occasionally berries, especially saskatoon berries, were put in. No further cooking was necessary and this preparation was very useful when they had to eat in a hurry, as, for example, at the Sacrifice Dance, when they didn't know at what moment some order might be given by the crier.

Rated next in the scale of foods valued by the Gros Ventres was the flesh of puppies. Although the flesh of grown dogs was consumed only in times of "famine," nursing pups were always considered a great delicacy. "These young pups are to us like chicken is for the whites, and that is why you see so many Indians with female dogs." In fact in former times the following method was used to assist a bitch which was having difficulty in bearing her litter: "One person would tie a rope around the bitch's neck and lead her around the lodge, while another would follow and, as they reached each of the four points of the compass, hit her on both hind-quarters with a moccasin filled with charcoal; by the time she reached the door again, the litter would come!"

The flesh and other edible parts of most of the animals hunted by the Gros Ventres were appreciated if there happened to be a dearth of buffalo, or as a welcome change during the winter months from the dried buffalo meat. As a rule these animals would be exploited for purposes other than for food. So far as additional meat diet is concerned, however, elk, deer, and antelope were the most important. Beaver probably came next. Prairie dogs, gophers, and several kinds of rabbit—cottontail, snowshoe, and jackrabbit—all were eaten in case of extremity, but these were ordinarily considered suitable trapping for children. Bear—black, brown and grizzly—were not sought, but should a hunter come across one, he killed it and the flesh was eaten, the grease being the only part that was to them worth storing. Some birds and their eggs were edible, such as duck, goose, grouse, prairie-chicken, and curlew.[8] There was a special use for meadowlark eggs.[9] Badger and porcupine were eaten, as also occasionally the young of wolves and coyote. The full-grown wolf and coyote, as well as fox,

[8] Eggs were a favorite food, according to Kroeber, 1908, p. 149.
[9] See p. 143.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

782 [white man above, Our Father] in our prayer, so you would return safe: 'Oh, White Man Above, Our Father, spare her life. If you are going to take anybody, we are willing that you should take us in her place. She is young and has children and lives happy. But we two are old and starved anyway, so if you want to take anybody, take us.'

"I told him: 'An operation is not dangerous if you have it in time.' Strangely enough both he and his wife died within a month. It was just like he had bought my life. I feel badly even now when I think of it. Their one son married one of my daughters. . . . Old man Magpie was one of the old timers."

782 264 Food offerings, except perhaps the puppy meat given the ancestral spirit helper, were typical "first-fruits" sacrifices, made before eating. These offerings were regularly made, as we have seen, before any more or less formal, festive or ritual meal partaken of by a group, and at least very commonly before even everyday family meals at home. The latter everyday usage is explained in the following statement of informants:

Charles Buckman: "Before eating, a piece of meat is held up and so offered to the Master of All, and then is put on the ground."

Coming Daylight: "Whenever they [the Gros Ventres] eat and in their ceremonies, they never eat right away, but have a prayer, like this [here she held up her right hand]: 'Now here it is, I promised you, Our Father, the One Traveling [sun], and the Last Child.'"

The little chunks of food given in this first-fruits sacrifice rite to the Last Child were "pushed in the dirt or ground and sort of covered up with a little dirt,"—in the indoor modern rite previously described, deposited in cracks in the plank flooring.

782 As appears from the foregoing accounts considerable minor variations occurred in this first-fruits rite at meals.

The only first-fruits sacrifice connected with hunting proper, as distinct from eating, was the piece of liver and bit of fat deposited, as a thank offering to Little Spirit, on the west side of killed game.

[252 262] Puppy meat was looked upon by the Gros Ventres as a delicacy. Cooked puppy meat was commonly offered as food to ghost helpers on their visits. After the puppy was killed, the hair was

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

singed off at a fire, and the insides taken out without skinning the animal; then it was quartered up and boiled.

In addition, Charles Buckman stated: "If a party went out to war and met the enemy, before the actual fighting began a man might promise to give grub and a feast to old people, and as part of the feast there had to be a dog,—a pup, of any color. After the party got back home [at the feast, before eating] four pieces of the dog meat were taken and held up and then set on [in] the ground, one each to the north, east, south and west. The pieces were held up as offered to God—in thanksgiving and as a prayer for future favors. Then the young man served the grub to the old people. Before eating they would say, 'O God, this young man has fulfilled the promise he made to you,' and they would pray for him."

What we may call, for want of a better name, sacrifices of person or somatic sacrifices, took three main forms: offerings of flesh, of finger joints, and of self-inflicted suffering and/or privation. Each of the first two is a sacrifice in the strict sense of the term; the third, in the broader sense. The gashing of arms, legs or face as a mourning custom was quite distinct in the Gros Ventre mind from the above flesh offering: it expressed sorrow, it was not in any sense a sacrifice or offering to the deceased. No sacrifices at all were connected with mourning. Nor were finger joints ever cut off as a mourning observance.*

In most instances recorded by us, these somatic sacrifices were made in fulfillment of vows for the cure or safety of a close relative of the vower,—as, it may be recalled, was the case with self-torturers in the Sacrifice Dance. There were exceptions however: in their respective quests for power, Bull Lodge cut off a finger joint, and Little Man, Al Chandler's adopted father, cut off bits of flesh; the other Little Man, Coming Daylight's husband, when suffering from hemorrhages and pains around the heart was told in dream that he would get well if he underwent solitary self-torture.

Women as well as men would make offerings of their flesh and finger joints. To judge from the records we obtained, the finger joint sacrifice was more frequently made by women than by men,

*Cf. Flannery, 1953, p. 205.

6: Cooper E-5 (1931-1940) 1944
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

Ventres' horses except those belonging to one man. This man loaned out his horses as far as they would go around to four of the Gros Ventres who went in pursuit of the Cree. 787 539

"Then that evening two of the other men, one of them my father, approached Bear Old Woman. They filled up a pipe just as you do when you go to someone to doctor you, offered it to the old woman, and asked her to find out from her ghost helper who stole the horses and where they were. Bear Old Woman, who had quite a temper, got angry right away as usual and pushed the pipe away as a sign of refusal. Finally one of the young fellows there, a relative of hers, said: 'Well, let me smoke it,' to force her to accept. She angrily grabbed the pipe and had to go through with the rite. When she took the pipe she rubbed her hands on the ground and rubbed dust on the pipe and offered a prayer before smoking. The pipe was then smoked by her and by the two men who had approached her. 787 539 791 [782]

"Then they began to get things ready. They killed a puppy, singed its hair off at a fire, took its insides out without skinning, quartered it up and boiled it. They put the boiled meat on a plate and got ready some other kinds of food to give to the old woman. Then the two men filled up a pipe and they together with two other men and with a 'servant' went to Bear Old Woman's lodge. On arriving there they set down the plate of dog meat near the head of her bed, the pipe between the incense hearth and the lodge fire, and the other dishes between the lodge fire and the door. [262 252]

"When everything was arranged and Bear Old Woman was still sitting on her bed, she said: 'Whoever is the greatest unbeliever among you, come and tie me up.' One of the four volunteered. Then the old woman got up and went to a place just south of the head of the bed, to a little enclosure made by hanging up a blanket. He hobbled her four fingers (thumb too?) with sinew, interlacing it in and out of the four fingers of each hand. Then he tied her hands together behind her back and also hobbled her feet. She was lying on a robe. He gathered the robe around her and tied her with rawhide thongs until only her head stuck out of the robe. And so he left her lying on her

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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The
796 regalia were placed in front of their owners. Lay members sat around the sides.

[354] The fire was near the center of the dancing-place and beside
252 it the essential pot containing cooked dog flesh. The meat was
262 prepared by first rolling the carcass in very hot ashes to singe off
796 the hair and until the flesh was almost black, after which the entrails were removed and the meat boiled. Incidentally, the Gros Ventres were very fond of the flesh of puppies and used it in large quantities to supplement other types of food for feasts at various gatherings, including the Grass dance. The food for the feast, of which all present at the Grass dance partook, was heaped to the east of the fire.

796 In this setting the ceremonial eating of dog flesh, which involved the preliminary dancing with crow-belts, and so on, was carried out. We shall refer hereafter to this whole performance as the dog ritual because this is the core of the Grass dance proper wherever found and, so far as the Gros Ventres are concerned, remained essentially unchanged from the earlier through the later period. We use the term "ritual" without implying that there was any religious significance attached to the performance in the minds of the Gros Ventres. Connected therewith were a few sex prescriptions the violation of which were believed to be punished by vague misfortune, but that it had any deeper meaning for the Gros Ventres there is no evidence. On the contrary, their indifference toward possible symbolism, for instance, is illustrated by their acceptance at face value of the statement as to origin and meaning by an old Sioux from Fort Peck, Black Prairie Chicken, who claimed that he personally had created the Grass Dance, saying that he had "gotten his instructions" from a rooster; that the headdress of upstanding red-dyed deer hair
796 represented the rooster's comb and that the so-called crow-belt
177 was in reality a rooster's tail. My older informants knew this old man when he visited the Reservation many years ago, and they assured me that although the validity of his story was not questioned, it had had no effect. They maintained that when the dance was transferred to them, the Assiniboine had not mentioned